

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 225445

EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, RP

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE BASE NEGOTIATIONS: SECRETARY'S
MEETING WITH ROMULO

REF: MANILA 13609

1. AS A RESULT OF CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION HERE REGARDING THE STATE OF OUR BASE NEGOTIATIONS, INCLUDING PARTICULARLY RECENT PHILIPPINE MANEUVERING, WE CAN ONLY CONCLUDE THAT MARCOS MAY NOW WISH TO POSTPONE SERIOUS NEGOTIATION UNTIL NEXT YEAR. HE HAD SPECIFICALLY INFORMED THE DEPUTY SECRETARY IN AUGUST THAT OUR REPLY TO THE AIDE MEMOIRE CONCERNING THE APPLICABILITY OF THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY NEED NOT BE IN WRITING. HE HAS OBVIOUSLY CHANGED HIS MIND AND WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE THAT HE MAY FEEL THAT HE CAN AFFORD TO WAIT US OUT OR THAT HE KNOWS A WRITTEN REPLY WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR US AND HAS CHOSEN THIS NEW DEMAND AS MEANS OF EFFECTIVELY POSTPONING PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

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2. IF MARCOS REMAINS ADAMANT, THERE APPEARS LITTLE CHANCE

OF MOVING THE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD UNLESS WE AGREE TO GIVE HIM A DETAILED WRITTEN REPLY TO THE AIDE MEMOIRE. WE ALSO REALIZE THAT EVEN IF WE SHOULD DO SO, THE SUBSTANCE OF THE

REPLY MIGHT NOT BE SATISFACTORY TO HIM, WHICH COULD ALSO LEAD HIM TO STALL THE NEGOTIATIONS. IN ANY CASE, THE ISSUES OF MDT APPLICABILITY AND THE FINANCIAL QUID TO BE OFFERED TO THE GOP ARE SO BASIC AND FUNDAMENTAL AS TO REQUIRE CONSIDERATION BY THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. WE PROPOSE TO INITIATE SUCH CONSIDERATION BUT IN VIEW OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ISSUES AND BECAUSE OF OTHER URGENT DEMANDS ON MY TIME IT APPEARS VERY DOUBTFUL THAT SUCH CONSIDERATION COULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

3. ACCORDINGLY, I PLAN TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF MDT APPLICABILITY AND THE MARCOS AIDE MEMOIRE IN ONLY VERY GENERAL TERMS WITH ROMULO. I CONTINUE TO REMAIN WILLING TO MEET WITH ROMULO BUT IT NOW APPEARS THAT A MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 22 WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE. IN VIEW OF ROMULO'S EXPECTED PRESENCE AT THE UNGA UNTIL DECEMBER, IT APPEARS THAT A LATER DATE COULD BE EASILY ARRANGED, IF NECESSARY.

WE WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH YOU REGARDING PLANNING FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS. IF THE FILIPINOS ARE SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN MOVING THE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD AT THIS TIME, WE ARE PREPARED TO CARRY ON, BUT THE WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE, INCLUDING THE NEGOTIATING RECORD, APPEARS TO US TO INDICATE THAT THEY ARE NOW MORE INCLINED TO WAIT THAN PROCEED.

5. FOR THE TIME BEING, SUGGEST YOU TELL ROMULO THAT BECAUSE OF MY IMPENDING TRIP TO AFRICA THE SEPTEMBER 22 DATE MAY HAVE TO BE DEFERRED. AS SOON AS I CAN MAKE FIRMER PLANS, I WILL SUGGEST ANOTHER DATE. I WILL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS IN GENERAL TERMS OUR MUTUAL CONCERNS ABOUT SUBJECTS RAISED IN AIDE MEMOIRE, AND APPLICABILITY OF MDT. AS FOR YOUR OWN PLANS TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON DURING THE TALKS, WE CAN DISCUSS THESE SEPARATELY.

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